

WOMEN'S OVERVIEW

By Jane Lippincott, Mary Livingston and Tony Hollins

The women's committee has made significant progress over the past year. Currently, there are over 200 U.S. women registered on RTO, unfortunately only 40% have recorded a match in the past year. Our goal, in addition to recruiting players, has been to encourage our existing player base to become more active.

We have been meeting on a regular basis to discuss ways to promote the women's game within our existing players. The biggest factors affecting participation are time and money. Subsequently, we have encouraged clubs to run women-only events at the club level – ranging from one-day tournaments to clinics. In both cases, the emphasis has been on a fun, social environment at a reduced cost to encourage women of all levels of play to participate. Washington, Boston and Newport – the three clubs with the largest number of women – have all run very successful events. We have also introduced an extremely popular annual interclub match – “Bread and Roses” between the Newport and Boston women. We will continue to promote one-day events in addition to our major tournaments.

Our major events continue to be the U.S. Ladies Open Singles and Doubles, the Anne Boleyn Handicap Singles and the Ladies Invitational. These tournaments are spaced out during the calendar year at different clubs. All three tournaments were moderately successful. Some of the player development funds have been used to offset the entry fees. We will continue to promote these tournaments with the hope of encouraging more women to enter.

Looking forward, our goals include engaging more women players in Philadelphia, Chicago, Aiken and Tuxedo. We are also beginning to work with the international associations, such as the Ladies Real Tennis Association to better coordinate international events. This is particularly important, as the U.S. will be hosting the 2017 Ladies World Championship Singles and Doubles. With that in mind, we need to insure that the U.S. is well represented as we only host the tournament once every eight years.

Tony Hollins will continue to serve as the pro coordinator. Over the summer we plan to work with Tony to review the women's tournament guidelines as well as work with clubs to design more one-day events.